

09/511,188

REMARKS

As an initial matter, applicants note that the Office Action does not acknowledge the June 21, 2000 claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge the claim for priority in the next communication.

The drawings stand objected to because Figs. 4(a), 4(b), 4(c), 5(a), 5(b), and 5(c) do not have the label "PRIOR ART," and because Figs. 4(b), 5(a); and Fig. 5(c) contain certain reference signs that do not have corresponding definitions in the specification. Filed concurrently with the present Response is a Request for Approval of Drawing Changes, which should overcome the objection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is hereby solicited.

Claims 1, 42-45, 48, and 51-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by **Hashimoto et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 6,387,721). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection should be withdrawn for the following reason:

Hashimoto et al. has an effective date of September 24, 1999.¹ Although this date is before the U.S. filing date of the present application, applicants claim foreign priority dates of February 23, 1999 and March 19, 1999. Therefore, the effective filing date of the present application is before the effective date of **Hashimoto et al.**

¹Obviously, the foreign priority date of **Hashimoto et al.** could not be used to antedate the filing date of the present application. (See MPEP § 2136.03.)

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Applicants perfect the foreign priority filing date by filing verified English-language translations of the priority documents JP 11-045067, JP 11-045123, and JP 11-076421 in accordance with the procedure prescribed in MPEP § 201.15. The translations are filed concurrently with the present Response.

In view of the submission of the verified English-language translations of the priority documents, applicants now solicit the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claims 1, 42-45, 48, and 51-53 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claims 2-41, 46, 47, 49 and 50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over **Hashimoto et al.** in view of **Adachi et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 5,523,256). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-41, 46, 47, 49, and 50 depend from claim 1, rejected as anticipated by **Hashimoto et al.** As explained above, applicants overcome the anticipation rejection of claim 1 by filing English-language translations of the foreign priority documents. Therefore, an obviousness rejection also cannot now rely on **Hashimoto et al.** Accordingly, applicants now request the withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of claims 2-41, 46, 47, 49, and 50.

In view of the amendments and remarks above, applicants now submit that the entire application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowability is hereby requested.

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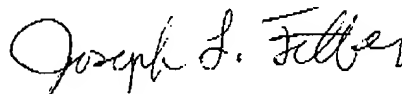
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If for any reason it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for disposition of this case.

Because this response is filed five (5) days from the mailing date of the Office Action, applicants hereby petition for a two-month extension of the period for response. The fees this extension, or any other fees which may be due, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,
ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP



Joseph L. Felber
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 48,109

JLF/led

Atty. Docket No. 000202
Suite 1000, 1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: English language translation of the priority documents JP 11-045067,
JP 11-045123, and JP 11-076421
Request for Approval of Drawing Changes

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